



SD-STARS inbox: Resources for data inquiry



The SD-STARS team recently received an email from a user, asking if we offer any resources to “help facilitate conversations and productive analysis at a data retreat.” Yes, we have several resources aimed at engaging staff in the process of data inquiry and analysis.

Training Center

Many of our data inquiry resources are found in the Training Center, which is organized by category. Categories include Accountability, STARS Reports Resources and Data STARS Resources. Within these categories are resources that could be used in a data retreat to understand data found in SD-STARS and to start conversations. The following are some useful data inquiry resources for data analysis (listed by category):

Accountability

Report Card Calculation Guides – These guides walk users through the data used in the calculations found in the Accountability Report Card. During data inquiry, like a data retreat, this document can help answer frequently asked questions about the report card.

STARS Reports Resources

Report DIGs – When doing data inquiry, one of the first steps is to determine data-related questions like, “What percentage of our

students are chronically absent?” or “Are our ACT scores improving?” The next step is to locate data. Many users find the data in SD-STARS reports. To understand these reports, the Training Center provides Data Interpretation Guides. DIGs contain a description of the report, questions the report could answer and common misunderstandings. The DIGs in the Training Center explain how specific reports will help answer the question(s) districts are asking during data analysis. As a further resource, some reports also feature videos in the Training Center.

Data STARS Resources

Cycle of Inquiry, Scavenger Hunt and Book Report – Data STARS are people who use SD-STARS and participate in extra training opportunities when possible. This section of the Training Center has resources explaining the navigation and makeup of the SD-STARS portal. Many of these resources are used during Data STARS trainings. Some highlights include: Cycle of Inquiry resources found in “Packet 2,” a document called “Scavenger Hunt” that asks questions people try to answer using SD-STARS reports and a worksheet called “Book Report” to help people document what they learn about a specific report in SD-STARS.

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SD-STARS Help Desk

SD-STARS staff are a great resource. We want to support users in your district. Let us know your questions, comments and concerns by emailing us at STARSHelp@state.sd.us. We are happy to help!

State offices closed

The SD-STARS team will not be available on the following days, due to state offices being closed for the holidays:

- Monday, Dec. 24
- Tuesday, Dec. 25
- Monday, Dec. 31
- Tuesday, Jan. 1

We will be in the office to answer questions and assist users Dec. 26-28 and Jan. 2-4.



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About Us:

South Dakota STARS Connections is a bi-monthly publication for South Dakota administrators and teachers, produced by the South Dakota Department of Education. This publication is intended to communicate news and events regarding the South Dakota Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System (SD-STARS), our Statewide Longitudinal Data System. To view an online edition of this newsletter, go to doe.sd.gov/publications.aspx. Email story ideas or questions to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

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Upcoming training opportunities

The cold winter months can be an excellent time to find a warm beverage and join one of the SD-STARS webinars! The SD-STARS team will provide the following training opportunities through the next two months:



Registration links:

SD-STARS Webinar (Topic: English learners)
Tuesday, Dec. 18, 3:45-4:30 p.m., CST

<https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com/public/Course/browse?courseid=12482>

SAM Training Webinar #2

Wednesday, Jan. 16: 1:00-2:00 p.m., CST

<https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com/public/Course/browse?courseid=12501>

Tuesday, Dec. 18: SD-STARS / EL Webinar

Do you want to learn more about SD-STARS but have limited time? Are you looking for SD-STARS information about a specific topic? You may benefit from attending an SD-STARS topical webinar! Our team offers webinars on relevant topics throughout the school year, where participants have enjoyed learning about local assessments, attendance reports, the Accountability Report Card, proactive admissions and college readiness coursework, general data analysis tips, dual credit reports and more. Recordings of prior webinars are available in the Training Center menu in SD-STARS.

Our next webinar will be Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 3:45 – 4:30 p.m. CST. We will join the SD English Learner Chat, where we will discuss SD-STARS resources that are helpful for educators who work with English learners.

STARS Certified Trainers

STARS Certified Trainers have been trained by Department of Education staff on SD-STARS and are kept up -to-date on system developments and new reports. Districts can contact trainers to request training at the district's cost.

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Wednesday, Jan. 16: SAM Training Webinar #2

Every public school district in the state has identified an individual who is responsible for managing accounts and security within SD-STARS. This individual is the district's STARS Account Manager (SAM). Each district's SAM is listed in the district's South Dakota Educational Directory entry at <http://doe.sd.gov/ofm/edudir.aspx>.

This year the SD-STARS team is providing SAM training through a webinar series. Join us as we discuss topics and processes that will help your district's SAM create and manage accounts for your staff! The first session in this series was offered in November 2018. The second webinar in the series will be Wednesday, Jan. 16, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., CST.

West Central District uses SD-STARS to answer data questions

The West Central School District wanted to use data found in SD-STARS reports to answer important questions and create meaningful goals for improvement efforts within the district. In preparation for the new school year, Brad Steckelberg, SD-STARS support lead, worked with West Central to design and implement a workshop for its staff members in August. This workshop helped people see student data in new ways.

"[After the workshop], our teachers were actually excited about data! Once they had the power to go in and find the information that dealt with their students, with their content... they felt empowered. High school staff

found a report that they did not know was there, and it alerts them on students who are in need of support to make it to school," said Sarah Weber, West Central's curriculum director and differentiation coach.

The SD-STARS workshop gave participants an opportunity to find resources, explore data and analyze results as a group. Weber said, "In the past, we would find the data that we thought the teachers would want to see and we shared it with them. It was a day-long event and the teachers dreaded it. After this training, our data retreat will be a half day work time where the teams will get together and organize their own data that has meaning to

them and will support what they need to do for their students. Goals will still be made, but they will have more meaning as the teachers will be able to personalize them to meet their students' needs. We will also be looking at the data while we start our math curriculum adoption to help guide our instruction. Brad was able to show our teachers how to log in, and he guided the teachers as they searched for several types of data, so they could learn how to maneuver through the site."

If you have questions or are looking for ideas to spur data conversations in your district, please contact the SD-STARS team at STARSHelp@state.sd.us.



Resources for data inquiry

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SD-STARS Presentations

When the SD-STARS team isn't busy making enhancements to improve the system, we present sessions at education conferences throughout the state, including sessions that touch on data inquiry. From conferences to webinars to specific SD-STARS trainings, we encourage all who are interested in knowing more about SD-STARS and our resources to attend. We advertise these presentations in the STARS Connections newsletter. If you miss a presentation, we make the presentation material available on our website: <https://doe.sd.gov/sdstars/>.

Our most recent presentations were related to data inquiry. In November, the SD-STARS Team presented two sessions about SD-STARS and resources that help with data inquiry at the Accountability and Data Road Show. If you missed

the sessions, the following links will take you to the presentation material:

- [Exploring SD-STARS Reports \(PDF\)](#): This presentation explores the What, Who, When, Where, Why and How educators can use SD-STARS to find answers to data-related questions.
- [Data Dig Presentation \(PDF\)](#): This presentation introduces the concept of using multiple measures of data to take users through the Cycle of Inquiry process of creating goals and action plans that are related to student data trends and observations.
- [Data Dig Handouts \(PDF\)](#): This packet of material provides templates and supplemental material to work through the Cycle of Inquiry.

Users can find presentation materials by searching "Presentations" in the SD-STARS Content Library.

Spotlight on attendance reports

The Department of Education continues to emphasize the importance of consistent school attendance, and SD-STARS can assist districts in their efforts to utilize attendance data. Three reports in SD-STARS display attendance data: Attendance Demographics (AT.001.00-X), Student Attendance List (AT.002.00-A) and Chronic Absenteeism Demographics (AT.003.00-X). Districts can use these reports to monitor attendance throughout the year.

Attendance Demographics and Chronic Absenteeism Demographics are similar. Both show five years of aggregate data in a table and graph. Both also allow users to look at the attendance data by subgroups such as race, economically disadvantaged, English learner, gender, grade level and special education. They differ in that Attendance Demographics provides aggregated attendance rates while Chronic Absenteeism provides aggregated attendance status. In other words, the Attendance Demographics report allows users to compare or spot trends in attendance rates, while the Chronic Absenteeism Demographics report allows users to compare or spot trends in chronic absenteeism.

The other attendance report, Student Attendance List, displays a list of students along with their demographics and attendance details, such as days enrolled, absent days, attendance rate and attendance status. Unlike the aggregate report, only one year of data will display. This report allows users to see attendance rates and attendance status for current students. In other words, the Student Attendance List

displays the students who appear in both the Attendance Demographics and Chronic Absenteeism Demographics reports. That means a user could sort the report by attendance status to get a list of students flagged “chronic” and counting in the Chronic Absenteeism Demographics report as “chronic.” What is attendance status? Attendance status characterizes a student’s attendance.

There are three attendance statuses – chronic, warning and good. “Chronic” is defined as absent 10 percent or more of enrolled days. “Warning” is defined as absent 5 percent or more but less than 10 percent of enrolled days. “Good” is defined as absent less than 5 percent of enrolled days.

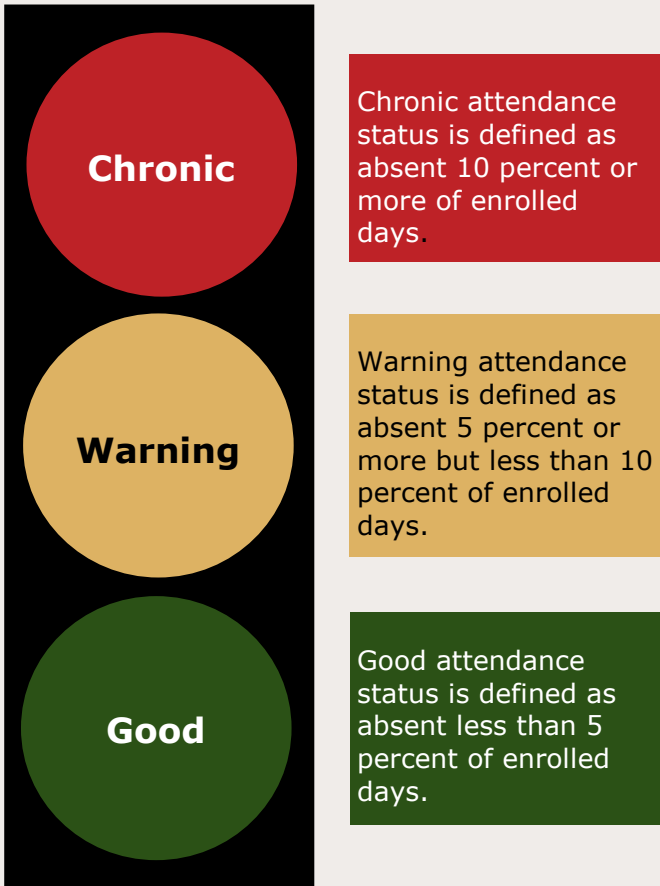
For all three reports, districts must sync their data in Infinite Campus the day before they plan to use these reports. These reports pull attendance data from the “Absent Days” field under the state reporting fields section of the Enrollment Tab in Infinite Campus. Districts enter absent days on the Attendance Tab in Infinite Campus. To get those absences entered on the Attendance Tab to appear in the “Absent Days” field on the Enrollment Tab, a district must sync their data.

Report Data Interpretation Guides, or DIGs, can be found in the Training Center in SD-STARS. Users can also access the Report DIGs by clicking on the blue link at the footer of the report that says, “Link to Report Data Interpretation Guide (DIG).”

If you have any questions or suggestions on these reports, please contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

Attendance status explained

Attendance status characterizes a student’s attendance. There are three attendance statuses, as described here:



New Report: First Year in Country

SD-STARS users will find a new report under the Accountability section of the Reports tab called First Year in Country. This report provides a list of students in the current school year who are considered English learners (EL) and whether they may be classified as first year in country. This will help districts in determining which EL students may be exempt from the English language arts state assessment for the current school year. These students would fall under the exemption that is granted for students who are EL and in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school. For this report, to be considered first year in country, a student must be enrolled no earlier than May 2 of the previous year.

Users should be aware that, unlike other accountability reports, this one is not a "snapshot" of data from the past. The report looks at current data and helps schools by providing a current list of students. No accountability calculations are

applied to this report. It is simply a report that provides a list of students who are EL and whether they could be considered first year in country for accountability.

The report provides the student's name, state ID, district and school name. Demographic information like grade level, race, gender, special education and migrant status are also included. The "First Year in Country" column contains an "N" and "Y." If a student is considered first year in country, they will have a "Y" in that column. The report also displays the first year in country date.

If a user wants just a list of EL students who are considered first year in country, they should select "Yes" in the "First Year in Country" parameter prior to running the report.

The Report Data Interpretation Guide (DIG) will be available soon in the Training Center. If you have any questions or suggestions on this report, please contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

System updates

Dual credit summer data

In December, the SD-STARS team will load dual credit summer data. After each term, the Board of Regents and the technical institutes send the Department of Education data on students who participated in the state-sponsored dual credit program. These data are loaded and made available to users via the four dual credit reports available in SD-STARS. Check them out today!

SDCL 13-28-50 requirements

In November, the Department of Education used SD-STARS to help districts comply with SDCL 13-28-50. This law requires districts to provide 7th-12th grade student mailing addresses to the Board of Regents and technical institutes for the purpose of sharing information about postsecondary opportunities. A "Student Directory Information" flag on a student's enrollment indicates the student does not consent to sharing directory information. Students with these flags are excluded from the mailing list.

